History of Alfriston.

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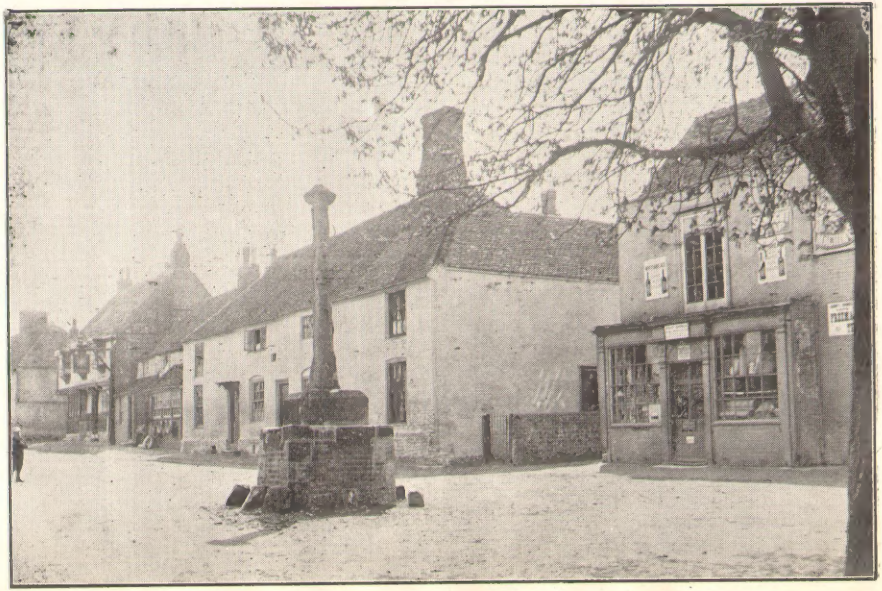
Sixth Edition, 1927.

First Edition, 1899.

By

Florence A. Pagden,

(Mrs. Hubert Winstanley)



Cross Stone and Village. *(Page 4.)*

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History of Alfriston.

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By

Florence A. Pagden

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

THE situation of Alfriston is exceedingly picturesque, nestling as it does at the foot of a range of the famous South Downs, whose slopes shelter it on the east and west. The north presents a splendid panorama of the undulating weald of Sussex, as far as Heathfield. To the south, a level landscape, through which the little river Cuckmere flows to the sea. "Green Sussex fading into blue with one grey glimpse of sea," Tennyson wrote, describing another view he loved, but he may have had this valley also in his mind, for years ago he was a constant visitor at Seaford, and his broadbrimmed hat and flowing cloak were well known in Alfriston, where he was spoken of as "the man what made 'potry' for the Queen."

Reference to Doomsday Book proves the ancient foundation of our town of Alfriston.

Some writers aver that Alfred the Great gave his name to it, but it is more probable that this was the fief granted to Alfric by the king, from his manor of West Dean. It would then be termed Alfric's tun, or town.

That this sequestered valley of the South Downs was once honoured by the presence of the famous king seems feasible, if he did not actually reside in West Dean.

In Doomsday Book the town of Alfriston is styled Alvriceston,* documents of the fourteenth century allude to it as Auston, and this was further corrupted, for we find that as the neighbouring manor of Alciston (Doomsday Book, Alsitone) was called Ahson, so Alfriston was known as Ahson town, or shorter still, Assen-town (the town of asses). Whatever

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* "Gibert holds to farm of the Earl of Sesingeham one hide in Alvriceston. Aluric held it as alodium. There is land for one plough. There is now one bordar. In the time of King Edward and afterwards, and now eight shillings."

"In this Alvriceton there hold of the Earl, Rannulf one hide, Ralph one hide, William half-hide, Ralph half-hide, Walter two hides. In the whole five hides and they vouch for as much. Lewine, Alwold, Alnod, and Godwine, held this land as alodia. There is land for five ploughs. In demensne now are three ploughs and a half and two villeins and six bordars plough for one half. In the time of King Edward the whole was worth twenty shillings now fifty-four shillings."

—*Doomsday Book for Sussex.*

may have given rise to this mediæval joke at the expense of the Alfristoners, it could scarcely have been merited, as it was during this fourteenth century that the present grand old church rose from older foundations, and in the early part of the sixteenth century the Star Inn was built, a noble hostelry indeed, telling the tale of past grandeur, and pointing plainly to the fact of the importance of the whole place in those times.

The popular pronunciation now is Alfriston, as it is spelt in some old papers, as on the pewter Communion Flagon, dated 1684. Curiously enough the only family to use the antiquated form Ahson resided only a short time at Alciston. During their stay they requested a woman in Alfriston to tell them the nearest way to Ahson, and she, though born within a few miles, and living near all her life, did not understand to what place they alluded.

In the town of Alfriston the houses have mostly tiled roofs, coloured by age a rich red brown, much admired by artists, and greatly adding to the beauty of the general effect.

I have advisedly spoken of Alfriston as a town, as although its importance has sadly diminished, and much of its glory has departed, still a town it remains. A village would only boast of one street, Alfriston has High Street, the Square, Star Lane, a street popularly called "Down the Bricks," really a continuation of High Street, and West Street, formerly known as Catt Street.*

In the Square rises the Market Cross, which has suffered considerably from the ravages of time and the hand of the would-be restorer, who in 1833 crowned the original shaft with the present hat-like stone, and removed the ancient steps which surrounded it, as they impeded the traffic, and utilitarians considered them suitable for door-steps, &c. The portions of stone now at its base are remains of the stone mullions of the church windows removed during restoration: the remainder of the mullions were carted away (I presume with the consent of the vicar) by a gentleman who lived in a neighbouring parish, and eventually sold by him to Arlington Church.

A drawing by Grimm, dated 1787, repre-

* once probably belonging to the Catt family.

sents the cross stone as much higher than at present, though even then the cross was wanting.

In the same volume of the add. Bur. Man. Brit. Mus. are other drawings by the same hand, namely :— A view of the town from Windoor Mill, which shows River Lane as an important thoroughfare ; a south-east view of the church, showing a large barn against the east wall of the church-yard ; a west view of the church, with barn at the south-west corner of the church-yard ; drawings also of Piscina, Sedilia, and Founders' tomb in the interior of the church and some of the devices from the front of the Star Inn.

Near the mutilated cross stands what, perhaps, appeals to modern minds more than ancient monuments or picturesque buildings, the Whiteley of Alfriston, under the name of the Victoria Stores. What village could boast such a respository of useful and ornamental household requisites ! There you may buy what you choose, from a postage stamp to a ton of coals.

On the opposite side of the Square is a modern-looking house occupying the site of the glove manufactory, which at one time

flourished here; old inhabitants can remember the long old-fashioned window, where the girls sat sewing. (This industry has been revived by the Women's Institute.) There were no machine-made gloves in those days! I have now in my possession a pair of gloves made at this shop and worn at a dance at the Dome at Brighton in 1825.

Exactly facing the glove manufactory is a wooden structure, the largest house in Alfriston, as it contains twenty-one rooms, six staircases and possesses forty-eight doors. Under the name of the Market Cross House it is now used as an inn. Once this was famous in local annals as the residence of the undaunted smuggler, Stanton Collins, a young man born of respectable parents, having a good wife, and every inducement to gain an honest livelihood; but the precarious existence of the wild and lawless smuggler held for him more fascination, and he headed a band which was known to all the countryside as the Alfriston gang. In the intervals of smuggling they amused themselves killing and stealing pigs. On one occasion they had safely conveyed the stolen property

to the house of Stanton Collins, but being quickly followed by the officers of justice could think of no better way of hiding the animal than by wrapping it in a shawl and putting it in bed with Mrs. Collins, who was ill at the time, and in this way they escaped undetected. For years they defied the law, and although many outrages committed at that time were attributed to them, they plied their trade with so much caution that no real evidence could be brought against them. No doubt this was in a measure owing to the connivance of the inhabitants who benefited by the nefarious traffic, and whose complicity is shown by the usual warning given to children, "Mind, if you hear the 'gentlemen' come along, don't you look out of the window."

The breaking up of the gang came at last by their leader being captured, and condemned at the Lewes Assizes to seven years' penal servitude for sheep stealing. His parents seem still to have retained great affection for their erring son, as, after the sentence had been passed, they prevailed upon a neighbour to give evidence of the good character of the

convict, and the worthy man striving to do his best in a hopeless cause, after parrying questions put to him, at last said, "My lud, if you want to beat a dog you can always find a stick to do it with." The judge indignantly ordered the man down, and with him sank all hope of a reprieve.

The last member of this gang, by name Bob Hall, died in the Eastbourne Union in 1895, at the age of ninety-four.

At the beginning of the century a certain George Gilbert addressed the people from the steps of the market cross, and his open air discourses resulted in the erection of a meeting-house, at the opening of which, some years subsequently, he assisted and preached. The former chapel has for many years been used as the local bakehouse. The new building was erected by subscription, the congregation not contributing money but giving their time and labour. Four square walls, a slate roof, a few windows, liberal whitewash and the thing was done.

The connexion was known as the Lady Huntingdon's, and the first minister, Mr. Betts,

was duly elected. He was a good man, who, as one who remembers him says, "never interfered with no one, be they good, bad, or indifferent," though he would often try by reasoning to get the people to mend the error of their ways. Some years after his appointment a Mr. Charles Brooker, one of the trustees of the chapel, wished to marry his deceased wife's sister. Mr. Betts refused to perform the ceremony, and the matter was, as they say, "laid before the Church." They decided that it might be done, but Mr. Betts stood firm. This raised considerable ire in the breast of Mr. Brooker, and one Sunday morning, without notice to the regular minister, he placed an itinerant preacher named Sands in the pulpit. When Mr. Betts arrived he quietly acquiesced in the arrangement, and himself went to the family pew, and the service proceeded.

On this same Sunday morning Stanton Collins and certain kindred spirits met in the George Inn, which at that time was open throughout Sunday. They had many a grudge against Mr. Brooker for his interference with their lawless trade, and when a comrade came

in and told them of the ousting of Mr. Betts, they at once agreed to reinstate him. They proceeded to the chapel and ordered Mr. Sands down: he naturally refused, whereon they forcibly ejected him, breaking the balustrades of the pulpit in the scuffle. They then insisted on Mr. Betts ascending the steps, and, having shut him in the pulpit, mounted guard round it and requested him to continue the service. His first action was to give out a hymn, and the one he chose was "God moves in a mysterious way." Shortly after this incident there was a heavy thunderstorm, and Mr. Brooker held a prayer meeting in the chapel, many people thinking the end of the world had come, and all agreeing that it was a judgment on them for the uncharitableness of the disagreements which had led to such disgraceful scenes. Nevertheless Mr. Betts was formally deposed, and Mr. Charles Brooker, being the only remaining trustee, took possession of the chapel, and preached in it himself. This caused another division in the congregation, and about five-sixths of them left, and hired the "Seven Croft Barn," and held their meetings there for some months. The old tallow chandlery being

to let, the managers hired it, and set earnestly to work to fit it up for their worship; they built three galleries, one on each side, and one at the back, and seated the floor and the galleries with plain but substantial seats. As soon as it was finished, the congregation removed into it, and held their meetings there some three or four years. Mr. Brooker dying suddenly, as he was starting for Lewes to have the chapel made over to himself, it fell back into the hands of the congregation again, and it is satisfactory to learn that Mr. Betts was again appointed minister.* The following table is taken from a manuscript book dated 1821, lent me by the Rev. R. Doughty.

ALFRISTON PARISH.

Inhabited houses.	By how many families occupied.	Houses now building.	Other Houses not inhabited.	Families chiefly employed in agriculture.
107	116	None	2	43

Families chiefly employed in Trade, Manufacture, and handicraft.	All other Families not comprised in the preceding classes.	Males.	Females.
56	17	324	324

* This account was supplied to me by John Tuckmott who had worked for my father as a boy and who printed the 1st Edition of this book.

At the last census (1921) the population was 557. This diminution is greatly owing to the decline of trade. After a lapse of nearly a century it is difficult to imagine what a busy commercial standing Alfriston held. I have already alluded to the glove manufactory; besides this there was a large tannery, among the sheltering ruins of which flowers and fruit now flourish; also a tallow chandlery mentioned above, now converted into a cottage, but once bringing in a goodly income to the owner, a certain Mr. Marchant.

A daughter of his made, what in those times was considered, a terrible *mesalliance*, as she married a strolling player, by name Francis Howlett, but after the marriage he deserted the buskin for a more settled life, and became a well known and much respected inhabitant of Hailsham. Mrs. Howlett was a lady of epigram, one of her favourite speeches being, "Verily nobody doeth anything right but myself." In the days of her widowhood she became bedridden and occupied a four-poster. Her maid, anxious that her surroundings should receive the requisite elbow-grease

Part of Mr. Marchant's House. *(Page 16.)*

The Star Inn.

(Page 51.)

to keep them in the cleanliness in which both of them rejoiced, used to draw the curtains of the aforesaid four-poster, tuck them securely under the mattress, and by this means keep her mistress from all dust, while she wielded brush and broom to her heart's content.

This lady was married, I see by the register, in 1799. She is buried in the churchyard, and the tombstone also records the death of Henry Reed, who married her sister. He is described as a wheelwright and talented musician.

A brewery commanded a large trade during the time when an expected invasion of the French caused a camp to be formed at Blatchington, near Seaford. One regiment was quartered at Winckton Barn. The following newspaper extract, quoted in Parry's "Coast of Sussex," is of interest regarding this subject:—

HEADQUARTERS, ALFRISTON,

*January 9th, 1804.**

Lieutenant-Colonel Firth and the Officers of His Majesty's First or North Battalion of Hampshire Militia cannot leave Alfriston without returning thanks for the obliging attention which they have experienced from the inhabitants of this town and neighbourhood.

* A hundred and ten years later, 1914, 250 engineers were billeted in the village during the "Great War."

The brewery is now a thing of the past; the vault forms a rose-garden, the malt-house a stable. Even the barber's shop, with its extended pole, has disappeared, and is now part part of the 'George' public-house, hair-cutting and shaving are done in private, not always with the judgment that one would desire. For instance, a school-girl staying with us, who wore her hair short, employed a local hairdresser who was also groom at the racing stables. He performed his task so thoroughly as to leave her practically bald except for her fringe, which he was afraid he might not cut straight, so put a pudding basin over her head while he trimmed it.

The picturesque old houses tell the tale of more prosperous days; they appear as mere cottages now, but in most cases there are only lath and plaster divisions between them; notably the block adjoining the tallow chandlery (which stands opposite the racing stables), now divided into four dwellings, once the residence of Mr. Marchant before mentioned. One beautiful half-timbered house is so smothered in whitewash that those who know the street

quite well scarcely notice it, and artists turn their backs on it and sketch the better preserved Star Inn. Unfortunately the old lattice window has been replaced by one which, though more pleasant for the occupants of the house, is not artistic. Church life here in the early part of the century was at a low ebb. The vicar, a pluralist, and non-resident. The sacred edifice itself was in a pitiable condition, and it remained so until 1870. The walls, roof, kingposts, beams, pillars, arches, all one mass of unsightly whitewash, the walls streaked with green mould, and glistening often with water. The altar, a plain table, covered with a red cloth. The high horse-box pews, and huge three-decker pulpit, added an air of gloom to the whole. The bases of the beautiful pillars have been much mutilated, as can be seen by the one behind the present pulpit. The others were most carefully repaired during the restoration which took place about 1885. It has been an immemorial custom here, under the many vicars who have successively held the living, to have evensong at 6-30 on Sundays, and a dismal affair it must have been, when

the congregation supplied their own candles and candlesticks. The proverbial church mouse was not wanting, and was so undaunted that it would haunt the church even during service. I well remember hearing of a lady who, asking if she might take refuge from one of these little creatures in the next pew, decided to remain where she was, for her appeal was answered by, "Come if you like, but we have two."

A large gallery occupied the west end, in which an instrumental band, consisting of violin, bassoon, and clarionette, supported the choir, the congregation turning towards them during the singing of chants and hymns. An organ placed in the gallery in 1859 caused at first much dissatisfaction, one old woman declaring that she "couldn't stand the noise of that there thing anyhow, it just did make her stomach ache." In time she became reconciled to the innovation; she was one of those who, on entering and leaving the church, paused before passing to her pew, in one of the transepts, to curtsey to the altar. An old man I remember always showed a like devotion by reverently

pulling his forelock. A quaint tale has been told me by an eyewitness of the three-decker days. The preacher waxing eloquent thumped his pulpit with such vigour that the large Bible open before him over-balanced and fell on the clerk's head. He, startled from his usual nap by this literal descent of truth, looked up, ejaculating "Amen" in a loud voice, when the heavy velvet cushion, following the Bible, fell full in his face.

CHAPTER II.

The Church.

SUSSEX Saints are few in number; S. Wilfred, S. Cuthman, S. Richard, and S. Lewinna are the only ones of whom there is any record existing. Of the last-mentioned saint, who flourished about 680, we find some notice. Her bones were laid to rest in a Monastery Church dedicated to S. Andrew, and many miracles were performed at her tomb, but no record is extant, that I can find, of her martyrdom. The curious tale of her bones being stolen, 300 years after her death, serves to show in what veneration she was held,* and what is more interesting to us of the present day, according to some writers, proves the existence of an ancient religious house on the very site of the present church at Alfriston,

* This tale is told at length in a Latin document, written by Drogo, and the translated extracts I have made use of are from Lower's "Sussex Worthies," and S. A. Collection.

Note.—S. Lewinna, a virgin martyr, was a British woman, probably a native of Sussex, who fell a victim, on account her faith, to a heathen Saxon.

which is still dedicated to S. Andrew. In 1058 Balgarus, a Benedictine monk, sailed from Bergue, in Flanders, for England, on a quest for relics, which might induce greater devotion across the Channel. Drogo, a monk, who accompanied him, says that, driven by adverse winds, the crew were fain to bring the ship to port, on the south coast of England, at a place called Sevordt, which Mr. Blaauw says is Seaford; next morning Balgarus with one companion started off to find some church at which they could be present for Mass, it being Easter Day. They met by the way an old grey-headed man, of whom Balgarus inquired what monastery it was they could see in the distance, to whose honour dedicated, and what relics were preserved there. The man answered, "It is the monastery of S. Andrew; S. Lewinna, virgin and martyr, rests there also in her body, excellent merit of whom is every day testified by heavenly power; you are answered; do you wish to know more?" Balgarus thanked him and said it was sufficient. There is no record of such a monastery existing, but that is not sure proof that it did not exist. There has been

much controversy as to the road taken by the monks, some thinking that this monasterium was situated at Beddingham, and the landing-place Seaford Bay. But the topographical description given does not tally, as Beddingham is not visible from that bay; and though there are cliffs on either hand, the Newhaven ones are some mile or more from the parish boundary. M. A. Lower* gives his opinion that the place of landing was Cuckmere, as Drogo describes the haven as bound on either side with high cliffs, and this spot is in Seaford parish, though situated at the extreme east end. The monastery the same authority takes to be Alfriston, which is visible from the haven, and distant about four miles, which corresponds to the distance given by Drogo as three leuga.

There is authentic proof of an earlier church than the present structure, and in absence of confirmatory evidence to the contrary, I think we Alfristoners may lay claim to the following incident having taken place in our parish.

* "Sussex Worthies."—Lower.

Drogo continues his tale of their journey, and says that on arriving at the monasterium they were present at Mass, having first requested to be shown the famous relics. The bones were wrapt in a cloth and enclosed in a coffer kept in the chancel. After the service the monks lingered in the church. The "œditus," a door-keeper, or churchwarden, being called away, they were left in charge. They fulfilled the trust in a strange manner, for no sooner was he gone than they proceeded to remove the bones, wrapping them in the cloth. As they did this, some finger bones fell out, and though replaced three times, the same thing occurred. This they took not as a reproof to them for thus stealing what they had been left to guard, but as a sign that the saint wished some token of her to remain on the spot, where her relics had wrought so many miracles. Therefore, leaving the finger bones behind, they hastened away with their prize, and returning to their native shores, the relics were carried in procession through Bergue, Ostend, and Walcheren. Such thefts as these seem to have been common, nor is there any record of their being

treated as criminal offences. I have mentioned that there is proof of a former church existing here, the present one dating from about 1398. Robert Reade, prelate, translated to Chichester, 1396, answered a petition* pleading great poverty John Leme, prior of the convent at Michelham, by bestowing on that religious house the churches of Alfriston and Fletching. The allegations on the assignment state the ruinous condition of the conventual buildings at these places, and represent the inadequate means of the people to restore them.† The appropriations were made in the usual form, and the king allowed them the advowsons of Alfrichesston and Fflechyng, with the proviso that the vicarages of the said churches be sufficiently endowed, according to order, from the diocesan, and that competent sums be paid to the poor parishioners, according to statute; but in those unsettled times, owing to the deposition of the king, the deed was not ratified until the prior renewed his appeal to Henry IV., when the

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* Records of Bishops of Chichester.

† The inundations from the river destroyed their crops.

king witnessed his own deed at Salop. It seems that the prior set to work to entirely rebuild the church, on a new site, for the legend runs thus:—It had been planned to build the church to the west of the village, in a field called the Seven Crofts (or, ar the genteel of this age term it, Saffron Croft), but each night, after the blocks of stone had been conveyed to their destination, they were hurled by supernatural agency over the houses to another field called the Tye. At last a wise man, seeing four oxen lying in this latter field, with their rumps together, it was decided to build on this spot, and in this form, namely, cruciform.* Many will see, in this legend, a resemblance to that related of Durham Cathedral, but here they did not, as the monks of Lindisfarne, carve the oxen on the wall. Whatever events may have led to this site and form being chosen, the effect is striking and beautiful. The builders used what was to their hand, flints, with which they chose each stone, and the regularity in which they were placed, have resulted in one of the finest specimens of flint work in

* Sussex Arch. Coll.

England. The buttresses are faced with stone, and are of massive proportions. The chancel measures 53 feet, the nave 79 feet, the north and south transepts each 22 feet. The tower rises in the centre, surmounted by a shingled spire, which, though not lofty, is slight and graceful. Some wiseacres shake their heads over this spire, saying it is in an unsafe condition, as it is considerably out of the perpendicular, inclining to the north-east; but those who were living here at the time tell us that this was caused by the hurricane of 1838. The roof of the church was formerly of Horsham slate, but it was thought advisable to remove this, as the weight of each piece is enormous. Specimens of the slate may be seen on the Star and George Inns, in the High Street.

The interior of the church is no less imposing than the exterior. The tower is supported by interior arches of great beauty, the piers of which are almost unique, being semi-octagon and concave. Above the capitals of the pillars at the east end are plainly visible the end of what must have been the rood-beam. Until a few years since this beautiful stone

work was disfigured by that horrible scourge, whitewash. The stone facings of the windows were in a like manner hidden, but by the unaided efforts of James Richardson, parish clerk, school and post master, who perseveringly scraped them, they were brought to light some thirty years ago. Contemporary with Richardson was "Old Sands."

The walls and roof are strengthened by chestnut beams and king posts, which have been renewed when the old wood became too rotten for its original use. Some part of these ancient beams were converted, by the genius of the village carpenter, Mr. Peerless, into the present handsome chairs standing within the altar rails. The oak carvings let into the backs, were presented to the then churchwarden, T. F. Sanger, Esq., by the Rev. W. Parish, vicar of Selmeston. The whole building is in the decorated and perpendicular style of architecture. The altar window is especially beautiful, though unfortunately, when the stone work was renewed during restoration, many of the graceful curves of the lesser lights were lost. The churches of West Tarring and Poynings have

windows very similar to this, but they are of later date, and seem to have taken Alfriston as their model. As to where the model for Alfriston Church was obtained no record is extant. The window has five lights, its two centre mullions, together with the arches which they throw into the jambs of the window, are of the first order, the other mullions of the second.

"The chancel has low side windows on both the north and south. All the front windows have perpendicular lines; the side ones flowing to tracery, evidently late. The nave has doors on the south, west, and north, the latter bricked up. The west door has square spandrils, and the south door a porch. The font is plain and square, its pedestal has at its angles engaged octagonal shafts."

The only remaining ancient glass is in the top lights of the north transept window, where in fine colouring is seen the figure of S. Alphege. The companion light is filled with a representation of S. Andrew.

Though this was only placed there a few years since, so much care was taken to copy the original colouring, that the difference is scarcely noticeable; the imitators were not so happy in the smaller portions of glass, which can easily be recognised from the richer hue of the ancient glazing.

The whole walls of the church are said to be covered with frescoes. I saw those on the north wall of the nave when they were uncovered in 1887, and though many people scorned the notion that they were worth preserving, I still regret their retirement under the more uninteresting plaster, with which it was thought wise to cover them.

I do not profess to be a learned antiquarian, but I must say that the frescoes, imperfect as they are, are vastly superior to the piece of scarcely distinguishable colour on the pillar of Wilmington Church, which has many times been pointed out to me as a valuable curiosity. One of the Alfriston frescoes extend from the extreme west end of the church to the first north window—a soldier in armour stands against a pillar, and a priest,

whose cope is upheld by an acolyte, carries the Blessed Sacrament. The faces, arms, and hands of the figures have disappeared, but the scarlet of the cope was clearly discernible. When a young unmarried woman died, there was formerly a custom existing in many parishes, of placing a wreath of white flowers on the coffin at the time of the funeral, this wreath being afterwards hung in the church, a fit emblem of decay. Such wreaths, called "Virgin Garlands," were hung in this church 100 years since. In an interesting book called the "Antiquarian Repertory," these wreaths are thus described. The writer says, "they were used for virgins, and widows who had had only one husband. The garlands were carried up the church before the coffin by young girls. The lower rim was made of a broad circlet of wood, whereunto was fixed at the sides two other hoops, crossing each other at the top at right angles; they were covered with artificial flowers, dyed horn, and silk. In the vacancy, between the hoops, hung white paper cut in the form of gloves, with age, name, etc., of the deceased inscribed thereon, together with strips

Exterior of Church. *(Page 22.)*

Interior of Church. *(Page 23.)*

of various coloured paper or ribbon, intermixed with gilded or painted empty shells of blown eggs, or other ornament, suggestive of the bubbles and bitterness of life; some had a solitary hour glass as emblem of mortality." Washington Irving likewise notices this quaint and pretty custom. In his Sketch Book he says, "that the ribbons were usually white to show the spotless purity of the deceased, though on occasion intermingled with black, in token of the grief of the survivors." This idea of blending the emblems of joy and sorrow seems to have been carried out, in later years, by the male bearers of a coffin wearing white smock-frocks over their black garments, and tall black hats adorned with huge crepe or silk black scarves, and they attended church on the following Sunday in this costume, and I remember the scarves being used afterwards by the women for aprons. The smock now has passed out of favour; it is no longer the pride of a cottager's wife that her husband should have the most elaborately worked linen one that clever fingers could execute. The white smocks were worn not only for funerals, but on occasions of rejoicing, grey linen taking their place on ordinary days.

Although the painted windows and frescoes are no more, the chancel has still some remains of interest. On the south wall is a handsome perpendicular piscina and three-seated sedilia, the rounded arches of which point to a date prior to the church as it now stands, the spandrils are headed by trefoil, and the whole is executed in Eastbourne green stone. In the north wall is a large deep recess, which in Horsfield's Sussex is described as a ministerium. It has octagon shafts, and an ogee canopy is finished with a trefoil of oak leaves. At the lower ends of the canopy are respectively a dog, curled up, with its head betwixt its legs, and the face of a nun. Can it be that the few bones which Balgarus left us of S. Lewinna rest beneath these stones, being carefully preserved from the former church or monasterium? From its position on the north side of the altar one is led to suppose that it is the tomb of the founder. It is curious that the trefoil of sedilia, piscina, and the tomb are the same design as that at the end of the principal beam of the pre-Reformation clergyhouse, which stands close to the church. Grimm's drawing of the sedilia, &c., before referred to, is entitled "The

Confessional." What reason he could have for so naming it I cannot imagine. The registers of this church have attracted a good deal of attention from antiquaries, owing to the fact that they contain entries of a much earlier date than are commonly found in similar documents. Parish registers were first ordered to be kept in the year 1538, and the Alfriston registers commence in that year. The existing document is, however, a transcript of an earlier one, and made in 1598, as appears by an entry made on the cover. The interest of this volume is in the fact that the records of marriages begin in the year 1504, followed by others in 1505, and then no more until 1547. It would appear, therefore, that a record was kept, of marriages at least, some time before the keeping of parish registers was made obligatory in 1538.

At the end of the register is a list of signatures and marks of persons (presumably parishioners) who, in 1641, signed a protestation set forth by the House of Commons on May 5th in that year. There follows some account of offertory money received and paid from 1766 to 1772, from which we gather that

the Holy Communion was only administered four times in the year, including Easter Day, Whit-Sunday, and Christmas Day.

The following singular entries in the registers are fair specimens of the way they were kept:—

Among the burials—

John son of Jo: 11. April, 1558.

A mayd child of Thomas Stone, unbaptized buried 27, September, 1592.

The son of a Mason buried 10, Febry., 1593.

Moores child buried 22, March, 1593.

The widow Banks and John Haynes, 24, Dec. 1682.

Goody Hilton bur : April 1699.

Among the marriages—

Richard Cole and his wife 19. May. 1612.

Symon Fuller was maryed 3rd Oct. 1612.

Among baptisms—

Anne daughter of Hughe Walker Vicar was Baptized the vij daye of December anno domini 1606. Borne the 30th daye of November in the Vic house Alfriston betwixt the houres of vj & viij of the clock in the mornyng anno predicto 1606.

There are at least six entries of baptism of the children of this vicar. If they lived in the pre-Reformation vicarage, close to the

church, they must have been rather crowded. Hugh Walker was vicar from 1594 to 1610, and his family seemed to have remained in the parish beyond that year, for his daughter Continent was married here in August, 1614, and died in December, 1615. Another daughter, Lovegod, was married here, and his son Christophilus was buried in 1634.

Mildred Reed, buried Jan. 12. 1816.
aged 24.

Beneath this notice is the following note:—

"A rumour having gone about that this young woman was buried alive, her grave was opened eleven days after her interment, in the presence of the minister of the parish, one of the churchwardens, the medical gentleman who attended her in her last illness, and a great multitude of people, all of whom on inspection of the body, were perfectly satisfied that the rumour was unfounded; although one old man, who is very deaf, said he heard a noise proceed from the grave two or three days before the exhumation.

"JOHN BENN, Curate."

I knew an old woman who told me she remembered when a child being taken to the church where the exhumation was made.

The old registers are dated according to

the ancient ecclesiastical year, beginning the 25th of March, the Feast of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary. This mode of reckoning is continued until 1752, but in some instances the entries are dated thus—March 22nd, 164½. Prayer-books dated 1660, and another 1704, have, after the Falle of Days of Fasting and Abstinence, a table of the Moveable Feasts calculated for forty years, at the foot of which is the following sentence:—"NOTE.—That the supputation of the year of our Lord in the Church of England beginneth the five-and-twentieth day of March."

The advowson of Alfriston was granted by Queen Mary (1558) to the Bishop of Chichester, but in the first of Elizabeth it again reverted to the Crown. It is a vicarage in the deanery of Pevensey, diocese of Chichester, and valued in the king's books at £11 16s. The great tithes belong to the trustees of Smith's Charity, and are appropriated to the following parishes in the proportions stated: Hertsherburg, £6; Betsworth, £10; Thomas Ditton, £10 6s. 8d.; Hynkfield, £6; Alfriston, £5; fee farm rent, £16 13s. 4d.; Longwy, £6

—total £60. The following is a list of vicars since 1560, together with a few notes collected by the Rev. F. W. Beynon :—

1317. William de Mari.
1352. Peter de Hoo.
1375. Edward Lord, instituted 15 March.
1376. Richard Suggeworth.
1385. William Everle.
1400. John Carlton.
1400. Robert Harryettsham.
1416. Robt. Nevyll.
1500. Wm. Gydney.
1500. Wm. Camell.
1516. Wm. Woode.
1516. Richard Lupton.
1523. Matthew Blackington.
1531. Richard Croswelar.
1560. William Tapsell.
1560. Richard Bagg. No signature in register.
1568. Thomas Banister.
1572. Diones Hurst (mentioned elsewhere).
1594. Hugh Walker.
1626. Thomas Tyroe a child, baptised 1630 and 1632 wife buried 1632.
1646. Samuel Smell.
1661. Thomas Malthus (he was one of the ejected ministers) instituted 24 April.
1663. Philip Barratt instituted 20 Feb, wife buried here.

1671. Robert North instituted 1 April buried in chancel 1709 wife buried 1672.

1709. Richard Russell inducted Jan. 5. Resigned refusing to take the oaths.

1715. Walter Barttelott, instituted 9 March last signature 1729.

1732. Robert Hay instituted Aug. 3rd inducted Aug. 5 1st signature 1734 end of old register.

1760. Joseph Wright, instituted 4th March, 1764. There is a signature of his in 1760.

1783. Thomas Williams; he lived at Seaford, was instituted 12th Feb., 1784 and continued vicar until 1807. Then there is a vacancy until 1812

1812. Charles Harrison, lived at Lewes.

1832. Charles Bohun Smyth, resigned in 1870, died at Alfriston 1872, buried in churchyard.

1870. John Campbell Stone, died and buried at Alfriston.

1874. William Stone, died and buried at Alfriston, father of Rev. S. J. Stone, author of "The Church's one Foundation."

1877. Thomas Toovey Hedges, resigned.

1882. James Puttick, resigned.

1889. Frederick William Benyon, instituted and inducted May 25th, 1889, died and buried at Alfriston.

1900. Richard Doughty. Resigned 1915.

1915. T. Hughes, exchanged with H. Breton.

1922. Henry Hugh Breton, exchanged with H. Lynne Jones.

1923. H. Lynne Jones, died and buried at Alfriston.

1924. Marchant Pearson.

The earlier names and dates are quoted

from the list of the Rev. G. Hennessy of the incumbents of parishes in the diocese of Chichester.

The bells are suspended in the tower and are rung from the floor of the church. The inscriptions and dates are as follows:—

1. T. Mears of London Fecit 1819, IADE.
2. Deo quemadmodum 1698.
3. Thomas Mears London Fecit 1811.
4. Soli Deo gloria pat homenibus IN IOH ACW.
5. † anno domini 1587.
6. ÷ WOX AVGVSTINI SON AT IN AVRO DEI.

In the second register there is the following note:—

"Mem.—Be it remembered by all good men and let it suffice as an instance of generosity worthy of their imitation; that Mr. John Ade, Yeoman of Alfriston, did of his own free gift present to the said parish the first bell in the peal of that Church, the same having undergone a complete repair this 12th day of December, 1811.

"THOMAS NORRIS, Minister."

Beneath is as follows:—

"The Rev. James Capper, M.A., Vicar of Wilmington, gave as a present to the said parish two large chandeliers at the same time for the use of the said parish Church."

The third bell was purchased in 1811 from the Parish of Berwick, and at the time it was said—

"The parson was poor, and so were the people,
So they sold their bell to mend their steeple."

This bell was recast in 1908 by Thomas Mears, of Whitechapel, London.

The fifth bell is stamped with ten pieces of old coin.

The sixth bell has a medallion with six fleur de lis. Its depth is 2ft. 8in.; circumference, 9ft. 1in.; weight estimated at 16cwt

The medallion and inscription are identical with the tenor bell of Poynings Church.

One of the bells was recast in accordance with the testament of William Osborne, of Alfriston—

"April 23, 1543. It : I wyll to the castying of ye broken bell VI.s VI.d"

Nicholas Bateman, fisherman, also leaves by will—

"May 15, 1543. Towards the castying of the third bell II.s"

The second and fourth bells of the peal were cast in a furnace erected at Alfriston,

there being records in the churchwardens' accounts for the year 1698 of fuel supplied for the purpose by one John Wood. This was no doubt after a commission (which was held throughout the diocese to inquire into the state of church bells) had pronounced that at Alfriston "one bell was cracked, and one wants a clapper." The last item reminds me of an incident which happened, I think, in 1887, when, it being the eve of harvest festival, the ringers mustered in full force for a practice: the choir, who had met for a similar purpose and were preparing to take their departure, lingered near the tower to watch the process of "getting up the bells." While this was in progress one of the bells refused to sound, and in place of the melodious vibration, a most ominous thud was heard proceeding from the belfry. The startled choir and ringers departed literally to the four corners of the church, and there stood, a white-faced, expectant throng, until, as dead silence succeeded, one ringer obtained a ladder, and, mounting to the belfry entrance, which is in the roof of the north aisle, discovered that the clapper had fallen, the piece

of wood by which it was attached having completely rotted away. This led to a survey of the whole belfry, and it being found that much repair was necessary, the churchwarden, Hugh Wallis, Esq., M.D., interested himself in the matter, and obtained considerable assistance towards the restoration required. As this edition goes to print further structural repairs are needed.

In the days of the parish clerk a collection was made by that functionary from the principal householders, the paper being always headed 'for the chimmers and ringers,' chiming being employed for ordinary services, ringing for festivals. The latter process is not devoid of danger to the incoming congregation. A gentleman once inadvertently trod on the rope, and speedily found himself on the floor; fortunately the accident was attended by no untoward results. During the incumbency of one of our numerous vicars, an old woman was employed to ring the bell for the week-day services, and an odd sight it was. She was a masculine looking woman, very tall and thin; her face, drawn into a perfect network of wrinkles, was surrounded by a black silk poke

bonnet, her gaunt figure attired in a dress of faded gas green rep curtain, and an apron of coarse sacking, which was tied at the waist and knees. The bell being heavy, each time she pulled the rope she was lifted off the ground, displaying thus at intervals a pair of beautifully clean white stockings and men's hob-nailed boots. Her severe expression and loud grating voice caused her to be spoken of as repulsive; but, as I knew her, she was ever kind and good-natured. The boarding, through which the bell ropes descend to the body of the church, is now decent stained wood, but in my young days it was painted a beautiful bright blue, with the sun, moon, and stars resplendent in gold. A curate of the late Rev. Bohun Smyth's time named it appropriately "the firmament." The same curate, who was far from being devoid of humour, was terribly upset on the occasion of his first sermon in Alfriston Church, by seeing a huge black ear-trumpet raised close to him; the intervening reading desk hid the possessor entirely from his view.

From time to time money has been forthcoming for the restoration of the church. As

early as 1685, there is a notice in the register of Maresfield of a collection by brief for the reparation of Auston (Alfriston) Church. In 1870 the chancel roof was renewed, and at the same time the font, which stood then close to the altar rails, was removed to the rightful position near the principal entrance. Shortly after, the present stalls in the chancel replaced the high pews, and the south transept pews and "three-decker" disappeared. In connection with the old pulpit this curious entry in an old parish book is interesting.

"July 28th, 1694."

"Memorandum—That the day and year above written, Mr. Thomas Chowne (son of Thomas Chowne Esqre of the parish of Alfriston in ye county of Sussex) did present ye sd parish, when he was of ye age of fifteen yeares, with a most noble and worthy present, being a very decent and costly pulpit clo-ath and cushion, to his great honor is it here recorded by me.

"Robert North, Vicar.
"William Gyles, Churchwarden."

The north transept next received attention, and through the generosity of one lady parishioner, a niece of Jane Austen, the south porch was transformed from a coal hole to its present beauty.

For some years longer the nave remained with high pews and white-washed walls, then, subscriptions being raised, the present pews were placed, and shortly after the roof received the much-needed repair, much needed indeed, for on one occasion, in consequence of heavy rain, the plaster fell in great solid lumps—an incident I well remember, for it was during service, and I narrowly escaped the deluge.

After this event, in 1886 the second sale of work was held (the first was in 1876, the object then being church restoration; of this I have no account to refer to, but I know it was very successful). The one in 1886 more than fulfilled the most sanguine hopes of the promoters, £59 being realised, the expenses, owing to voluntary assistance so readily given, amounting to £1. It was a noticeable fact that there were only two articles on sale priced higher than 10s.

Concerts and entertainments were given by friends, and in 1887 the alterations were accomplished. The west gallery was taken down, and the present vestries erected at the expense of one generous parishioner. The

pulpit sounding-board had for many years occupied a retired position on the gallery stairs. What became of it eventually I do not know. When and why removed I do not know either: perhaps some former vicar shared the belief of the old woman who said, "If so be the parson doant preach the right gospel, that 'ere thing comes down on 'is 'ead."

An interval of another ten years and again the Alfriston people are exerting themselves for their church. This time the spire requires repair, and over £20 is handed over to the churchwardens as the result of a sale of work.

In 1905 the spire of the church was restored throughout at a cost of £350; this sum being raised by subscriptions and by the proceeds of sales of work, etc.

The church is not rich in monumental remains. The earliest is dated 1671, to the memory of Mrs. Joan North, wife of the then vicar, Robert North, who was buried here in 1709. These are both flat stones in the chancel. In the churchyard, under the south transept window, is an upright stone recording

"James Richardson, Alfriston: Schoolmaster, teacher of the ignorant on the flute, cornopean, first fiddle, horn, and bugle: Brewer of small beer: Parish Clerk and half curate: Collector of taxes: Land measurer: Assistant Overseer: Postmaster & Collector of debts."

(Page 29.)

Old Sands.
Postman, walked 20 miles per day from Lewes to Alfriston and return for 40 years. *See full account in "Home and Country," N.F.W.I. Sept., 1927.* *(Page 29.)*

the death of Mr. Charles Springate Brooker, who had such an awful dread of being buried alive that he ordered a grating to be made in his coffin, connected with one close to the stone. This was done, and I can remember seeing it, but of late years the grating has disappeared, and only the bricks surrounding it remain. I think it was 1859 or thereabouts that Mr. Richardson, before alluded to, found close to the surface in the churchyard a curious implement to which it is difficult to ascribe a name, as it embraces the uses of a tongue and ear scraper, with a third blade so arranged that it covers the other two. It could easily be carried in the pocket. An illustration is given in the *British Archæological Journal*, and also in the *Sussex Archæological Collection*, from which sources I have obtained the above description. The quoted authorities say the material was silver gilt. On one blade is inscribed—

IHS ✠ HELP ✠ ME ✠ DIO HERST.

On the ear pick is—

† DIO ✠ HERSTE.

The interest of this extraordinary appendage is heightened by the fact than in the parish

register is found the following entry—

"Buryall ad. Dni, 1584."
"Dennis Herst, buryed the xiiij of Februarye."

The vicar of Alfriston, from 1572 to 1584, was one Diones Herst, surely the possessor of the above. Some interest attaches to a quite modern piece of embroidery, which is now used as a pulpit hanging during Lent,* from the fact of the design being almost identical with an emblematic representation of the Trinity, which was formerly to be seen in the glazing of the north chancel window. An illustration of the ancient design is to be found in Lower's "History of Sussex." The only ancient plate belonging to the church is a silver chalice with lid, and inscription "I.B.R.L., 1683," and a pewter flagon inscribed "Allfriston 1684."

The Reredos was given in 1900, and the very beautiful east window was erected by C. W. Montague, Esq., of Dean's Place, in memory of his brother, in 1903. The windows in the south aisle were given in 1914.

The churchyard was enlarged by taking in a part of the Tye in 1901.

* This I am told is not now in existence.

CHAPTER III.

The Star Inn.

THE foundation of ancient hostelries was generally connected with some great family, or with a religious order. The many quaint and interesting carvings with which the Star Inn is decorated give credence to the supposition that it was built by the Abbot of Battel. Alfriston was formerly a place of peculiar religious importance, and the Star was also a sanctuary, enjoying this privilege with Battle Abbey. A letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for 1767 quotes the following incident as a proof of this.

"The Star Inn at Alfriston was a house of entertainment particularly for mendicant friars, and an

asylum to persons who fled from justice, it being within the jurisdiction of Battel Abbey; for in Jeake's "Characters of the Cinque Ports," we have an account of one John Birrel, who in the 8th year of King Henry VIII., having stolen a horse at Lidd in Kent, fled to this village for refuge, there said to be within the jurisdiction of the abbot and convent of Battel; to which abbey William the Norman, as appears by a charter of Henry I., gave the manor and hundred of Alciston, of which Alfriston is a part. The landlord is as great a curiosity as the house."

"(Signed) STEPHEN VINE,
"Heathfield, 1767.

"To Mr. Lucas of Alfriston."

I find, in all accounts, it is said to date from the early part of the sixteenth century. The exterior carvings are various, and are as follows:—S. George, the patron saint of England, is depicted, fighting the dragon; this occupies the space under one window. S. Giles, the hermit, with the hind at his feet, is represented on a bracket close to the principal entrance. On the opposite side is an ecclesiastical figure, taken by some to be intended for S. Julian Hospitor, the patron of travellers; but his emblem, a stag, is wanting. The device under the centre window, of

two serpents with tails entwined, supporting a niche or tabernacle, is merely ornamental; that of a bear and lion climbing a staff is full of interest and conjecture, some thinking it to be intended for the well-known Dudley emblem; it certainly bears a marked resemblance to the design found on the wall of the Tower of London, where Lady Jane Grey was imprisoned, and also to the seal, which was struck during the few short days that that beautiful and unfortunate lady was hailed as queen; but the connection with this illustrious family cannot be satisfactorily traced. Harrison Ainsworth has striven in his interesting work, 'Ovingdean Grange,' to show that Charles II. visited this inn before he embarked, but it seems clearly proved that he did not get further along the coast than Brighton; however, as the old woman said, "I've never been to Yorkshire, but my son just do like Yorkshire relish," we may say if Charles II. did not visit this town, a Mr. Charles Pendrell, descendant of a brother of the Pendrell of Boscobel Oak fame, practised physic here about the middle of the eighteenth century. He was immensely proud of an allusive coat of arms, to which he was entitled,

and he enjoyed a pension of one hundred marks, as the eldest representative of the family. He had many god-children, all boys, and his stipulation, before representing them at the font, was, that they should be called Charles. This accounts for the otherwise curious fondness for this name, in the Ade, and other old families. An inn which stood near Long Bridge, but which has now disappeared, was, at his suggestion, called the Royal Oak.

The Star hostelry seems to have been a place of great repute, not only as a resting-place for lordly abbot or humbler monk, from the neighbouring manor and priory of Alciston, Michelham, or Battle, when they came on business connected with the church or to collect their rents, but for many pilgrims, who would pass through Alfriston, on their way to the shrine of Richard-de-la-wych, at Chichester. This great and good man held the see from 1244 to 1252. He is honoured as a black letter saint in the prayer-book calendar. For many years after his death S. Richard was held in great veneration, and wonderful miracles were said to have been wrought at his tomb in

Chichester Cathedral, to which pilgrims resorted in crowds. The star bears his emblem, carved under the principal entrance. The red lion at the south corner of the house is the figure-head of a Dutch ship, wrecked off the coast at Cuckmere Haven about the end of the 18th century. The roof, which looks oppressed with its own solidity, is mostly of Horsham slate, and it is wonderful that for so many years the timbers have upheld the weight of these ponderous slabs. The plaster on the front was removed, revealing the beautiful timbers, in 1902.

The interior does not present so many objects of interest as the exterior would lead one to expect. The beams are massive and numerous; on the principal one is carved an I. H. S., and the mantel piece in the kitchen is decorated with the carving of an angel, which forms a corbel. These point, as the designs without, to a foundation of a semi-religious character. Alfristoners in the olden time, I am afraid, were rather apt to join in insurrection, the names of three Alfriston men being given in the list of Sussex men who took

part in Jack Cade's rebellion. Again in 1662, one Moses Downer being mine host, the Star Inn was used as a rendezvous by two gentlemen whose names are given* as Thomas Husbands of West Dean, and Thomas Read, his uncle, residing at Charleston, when they with others sallied forth to join more malcontents who were in favour of a commonwealth; their failure to re-establish which is a matter of history. There are those yet living who merrily tripped "on the light fantastic toe" in the old ball-room of the quaint old Star. In those days and for many subsequent years, a certain sweet Ann Page was mine hostess; sweet indeed she was, and though afflicted with a deafness which much increased in later years, she retained, until her death, which took place in 1894, a ready sympathy with the joys and sorrows of others.

"Her joy was freely to impart her own,
And ask for naught again;
No selfish greed, no lust of power,
Defiled her bounty's kindly shower."

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* Sussex Archæological Collection.

She thoroughly enjoyed a little joke too. I can see her dear old eyes now, which were as bright as a girl's, twinkle with fun over a bit of harmless gossip, or a remembrance of some incident which amused her.

Chapter IV.

The River Cuckmere.

IT will seem absurd to many that the little river of Cuckmere should be thought worthy of a chapter to itself, but if we come to comparisons, I have heard an American say that his disappointment when he first saw the Thames was very great: he had been accustomed when a child to hear it spoken of as a great and mighty river, but the reality, while he acknowledged its beauty, was to him puny and insignificant, after the roaring tumbling mass of water on the shores of which he lived, and which they designated merely a creek, but which was wide enough to test the powers of an expert swimmer. A small English boy, living "on the banks of the silvery Thames," thus contemptuously spoke of our

Cuckmere river—"Call that a river? It's only a ditch." The Cuckmere, at Alfriston, now is certainly not an imposing sight, but we are told that in the ages long since gone by, when the bones of those now resting in tumuli, on the quiet slopes of the Downs, were living, active men and women, it was a noble rival even to the Thames. Its name signifies its lake-like character, and very beautiful it must have been with its waters lapping the very foot of those glorious Downs. We can fancy that the rude boats of the tribes, evidence of whose occupation is abundantly proved by archæological research, sailed up this stream to find a new home on the neighbouring heights. It has two sources, one at Heathfield, the other at Possingworth, in the parish of Waldron, from whence, swollen by many streams, it flows through Hellingly, and thus early in its course forms a boundary line between that parish and East Hoathly; it then passes through Chiddingly, the birth-place of the well-known Sussex antiquarian, Mark Antony Lower, and on reaching Michelham serves as a moat to the Priory; from there to Sessingham (which name is now only used for the bridge over the

river but is a survival of the family name of De Sessingham, who flourished here as owners of iron foundries), with many twists and turns the little stream pursues its course to Longbridge, which title is certainly now singularly inappropriate, but the spot is important, as it gives the nomenclature to the Hundred comprising Arlington, Folkington, Berwick, Litlington, and Wilmington; from this bridge it flows through Alfriston and finally empties itself into the sea at Cuckmere haven.

There is no properly constructed harbour, and the incoming tide often entirely blocks it with shingle; when this happens a plough-like instrument is called into requisition, and it is cleared for a time, but it is seldom safe, if feasible, to take a boat through out to sea. The haven, now a quiet peaceful spot, the coastguards' houses being the only human habitations, was in former years the scene of many a struggle with smugglers. In 1733 the officers of Customs from Newhaven came here and succeeded in seizing a horse laden with tea, but they were overpowered by a band of thirty men, who confined them while the booty

was carried off to a place of safety.

A newspaper extract quoted in Parry's "Coast of Sussex," dated 1783, says:—

"On Tuesday evening, between two and three hundred smugglers on horseback came to Cuckmere and received various goods from the boats, till at last the whole number were laden, when in defiance of the King's officers, they went their way in triumph. About a week after this, upwards of three hundred attended at the same place, and though the sea ran mountains high, the daring men in the cutters made good the landing, to the surprise of every one, and the men on horseback took all away. . . . Alfriston races begin next Tuesday."

A ridge of the Downs still bears the name of "the race course."

A history of Eastbourne published in 1787 asserts that the Dutch offered £1,000,000 sterling for the possession of the harbour of Cuckmere and the right of anchorage, but through policy were refused. There is no proof of this incident. A headstone in Alfriston churchyard records the fact that John Lower, born 1735, first navigated the Cuckmere river, from the sea to Longbridge; he brought a load of beach up in a barge, an occupation still

carried on. He was the great-grandfather of the M. A. Lower mentioned above. In winter this humble stream overflows its banks, flooding the level sweep of meadows, or, as they are locally called, "brooks," and if the high tides occur at the same time as heavy rain in the Weald, it does not take long to accomplish it. I remember some years ago families came to church at Alfriston one Sunday morning, without thought of flood, and when the service was concluded found it impossible to return across the bridle bridge and path, and even at Longbridge the water had risen much higher than would be pleasant to walk through. Some young and dainty maidens would not soil their little shoes by attempting to cross, but waited until a cart had been summoned to their aid, into which they were lifted bodily by their serving man. One lady, however, was not to be deterred from trusting to her own feet, and tucking her petticoats safely up, nobly plunged into the wave, the water reaching to her knees; this was in the days of white stockings and long skirts! ! ! I think it was in the same year that the water lay so long on the Seaford Road by Dean's Place, causing the springs which

abound under many of the highways to break up, that a quagmire was formed. A stout old gentleman, walking unwarily, trod on one of these quagmires and was only hauled out with difficulty by a nurse, who was passing with her charges. Ague was a constant visitor in Alfriston and the neighbourhood until about twenty years since, when the river Commissioners instituted a better form of drainage. The river walls are higher and better kept, and the result is eminently satisfactory, ague being unknown, and in the event of a flood the water sinks away so rapidly that no discomfort arises therefrom, and the valley is decidedly healthy, many visitors deriving great benefit from the sea and hill breezes.

About the year 1838, during an unusually hard frost, the river was frozen sufficiently for people to walk on it, but a high tide broke up the ice, which with the ebb was carried down the river. A man and woman crossing Litlington bridge stopped to see this uncommon sight, when, seeing a large block nearly the width of the river floating towards them, they moved, fortunately for them, for the tide lifted

the mass on its end, and the top falling flat on the bridge, knocked the whole fabric down. The bridge was rebuilt, but it seems not very satisfactorily, for, as my father, Mr. James W. Pagden, returning from hunting, rode over it, it gave way, precipitating him and his horse into the water, fortunately with no worse result than a thorough wetting, but the horse would never cross the river again.

Frog Firle, 1860. *(Page 67.)*

Old Vicarage as it was. *(Page 65.)*

CHAPTER V.

Old Houses and Their Inmates.

THE old clergy-house is contemporary with the church, and presents a curious and instructive example of the home of the parochial clergy in the fourteenth century. It is constructed of oak framing, with wattle and dab in the interstices, open timbered roof, cambered tie beams, and moulded king-posts. It has been purchased and put into repair by the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or National Beauty, 1, Great College Street, Westminster, S.W. Copies of papers describing it, and other similar properties of the National Trust, can be obtained from the caretaker. An old elm still standing in front in 1927 has a hollow trunk which as long ago as 1889 was used as a hencote.

I have mentioned in the account of the church that the spire suffered from the hurricane of 1838. Much damage was done at the time by the fury of the gale. An old Frog

Firle workman was telling me the other day that he was working in the barn on Hindover, and being sent to Frog Firle to ask "master" (Mr. Henry Pagden) if they might leave off work, he had to crawl some part of the way: before he had returned the men had left, and the barn was down. On Frog Firle House only three ridge tiles were left the whole length of the roof. The year following this hurricane there was a terrific snowstorm. The same workman told me, "Ah, Miss, it just was bad; why the 'ship' was buried top o' Hindover, and had to be dug out." This rather puzzled me until I realised 'ship' meant sheep. He was garrulous in the extreme, but his conversation was always to the point, and he has had an opinion to offer on most subjects. I always thoroughly enjoyed a chat with "Richard," as he was full of anecdote of the times when "your father was a boy, Miss." To him I am indebted for the revised account I have given of the scuffle in the chapel and the ice in the river. Another well-known man died at the ripe age of 97 in 1924, "Old Hilton."

My grandfather, Mr. Henry Pagden, occupied Frog Firle House from 1816 to 1860. The following letter was written to my grandmother on her engagement.

I thank you my dear Susan for your pious and affectionate note, tell Mr. Pagden we readily excuse his not calling. We wish him to believe there is no person whose protection for you we should prefer. I beg my love you will not suffer your spirits to be too much agitated and as health is one of our first blessings so it becomes one of our first duties to pay every attention that is likely to render it permanent.

Your truly affectionate Mother,
A. ADE.

November 20th, 1810.

Frog Firle House was built in 1538: a curious piece of information regarding its former inmates came to light in 1862, when on the removal of some old panelling some papers were discovered; one dated 1654 is a law paper concerning Robert Raynes, who resided here and was a person of some importance, his burial being recorded in the register as Mr. Robert Raynes. This was December 13th, 1682, and in the entries of baptism of his children, of whom he had

several, the word "gent." is inserted after his name and his wife's name (Joan) mentioned. In looking through the old registers one can judge of the status of the various persons by the manner of the entry. Mr. Raynes was succeeded by Mr. Robert Andrews; he also had several children baptised at Alfriston, and his wife Dorothy was buried here in 1691. Two curious letters from his medical man, also found in 1862, give an insight into the style of doctoring in the seventeenth century.

"MR. ANDREWS, — I have sent you some things which you may take in the manner following, viz.:— of that in the bottle marked with a x you may take off the quantity off a spoonfull or so, now and then, and at night take some of those pills, drinking a little warm beer after it, and in the morning take 2 spoonfulls of that in bottle fasting an hour after it, and then you may eat something, you may take also of the first and every night a pill, and in the morning I hope this will do you good, which is the desire of him who is your loving friend,

"WM. BENBRIGG."

"MR. ANDREWS, — I have sent you 2 boxes of pills, of the biggest box you must take 4 at a time every 3 hours in the day and after them drink 3 or 4 spoonsfulls of that in the biggest bottle as it is, and of the

pills in the lesser box you may take one at a time every other night, and of that in the little bottle you may take 10 or 15 drops at a time 3 or 4 times a day and I hope that with God's blessing these things will free you from your distemper which is the hearty desire of him who is,

"Your friend and servant,

"WM. BENBRIGG."

The name Tile Barn serves to show the singularity at the time of its erection of the use of tiles instead of thatch; this barn, standing on Frog Firle estate, was one of the many in the neighbourhood burnt by the hand of an incendiary in 1834. Agitators harangued about this time in all parts of the country, inciting men to protest against the use of threshing machines worked by horses instead of the old-fashioned hand-flail; they represented that it was a mean plot on the part of employers to reduce the number of hands required, that in consequence many would be thrown out of work, and, therefore, the employed must show their disapproval. The result was arson, and, with the usual effect of such lawless conduct, the original grievance was lost sight of, and many barns

were fired to satisfy private grudges without reference to the use or disuse of the obnoxious threshers. The nuisance became so great that the "Union Prosecuting Society" was formed, to which the farmers subscribed. It will throw some light on the matter, and show the seriousness of the outbreak, if I quote from the following letter: It is dated from Whitehall, 27th November, 1834, and has the autograph signature of the Duke of Wellington. "The printed Handbill appears to notify the offer of a further Reward of £100 by the Union Prosecuting Society, in the case of Arson to which your letter refers, beyond the offer of Fifty-eight pounds . . . Under the circumstances the Government will give an additional Reward, in this Case, of Fifty Pounds beyond the sum mentioned." . . .

The above was sent to Mr. Pagden, then of Frog Firle. Notwithstanding these rewards the guilty parties were not discovered. One barn which was burnt was the Tithe Barn, the remains of which stand close to the east wall of the churchyard.

On the steepest part of the Downs, between Seaford and Alfriston, there is still the remains of what was once the form of a horse, cut in the turf by my father, Mr. James Pagden, and his brothers when they were young men living at Frog Firle. A young cousin assisted them; this boy was very enthusiastic on the subject of the barrow on the same hill, and went wild with delight when his digging was rewarded by finding an old meat spit and huge horseshoe. His ardour was somewhat damped when he discovered that his cousins had prepared his find, the meat spit coming from the attic at Frog Firle, the horseshoe from the farm. Between Frog Firle House and Alfriston there stands what remains of the residence, for many years, of the Chowne family. Thomas Chowne built Place House in 1600, when at the age of seventeen he left the university without degree, and settled down to a country life on his own estate. He wrote a work which at the time caused great discussions; the title is lengthy, being "Collectiones Theologicarum quarundam conclusionum ex diversis Authorum sententiis excerptæ." It was published in London in 1635. This learned gentleman died in 1639,

and was buried at Alfriston. His descendants continued to occupy this house until his great-great-grandson quitted it for London.* This last occupier was a noted antiquarian, Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, and possessed of a valuable library, which was destroyed, with the mansion, by fire in 1765. The story told to me as a child, which I believe is correct, is that Mr. Chowne had himself placed some of his books and papers before the library fire, thinking them to be damp; a maid found them in (as she thought) too close proximity, and removed them: her master, enraged at her interference, promptly put them back as he wished. A spark flew out of the grate, the papers quickly ignited, and the house, saving the small portion now standing,† was burnt to the ground. This incident, I have always been told, took place on a Sunday during Divine Service, the obvious moral being carefully pointed out to me. The real date of the fire I believe

* Lower's 'Sussex Worthies.' Horsefield's 'Environs of Lewes.'

† An architect, on my pointing out Place, or, as it is now called, Burnt House, as one of the old residences, contemptuously silenced me by saying that the building was Georgian. I have looked in vain for any record of the house being re-built during that period, and been told by those who were living in 1816, that it was the remains of the original structure.

was June 3rd, which that year fell on a Monday, but such a pile would burn for many hours; I do not like to give up such an excellent example of the ills that one is liable to if the church services are neglected. It is wonderful that even a portion of the mansion should have escaped the ravages of the fire, as according to the account of my great grandmother (who was living in Alfriston at the time), the only means they had of extinguishing the blazing pile was to form two rows of men from the house to the river, whereby a constant succession of buckets of water was passed from hand to hand. Mr. Chowne was much depressed by his great loss, which included many books of great antiquarian value, especially on the history of Sussex, and he retired to London, where he spent the remainder of his life; his only daughter, Elizabeth, married Count de Bruhl, and dying without issue, the estate was succeeded to by a Mr. Tiltson, who took the name of Chowne in 1811. In the genealogical tree of the Chowne family, one (the first resident I think) is spoken of as of Frog Firle, Alfriston, but I cannot find that at any time that estate was included in the Place House one.

Deans Place, situated immediately south of the town surrounded by the remains of a moat, seems constantly to have changed hands. In the early part of the eighteenth century, the family of Gyles was in possession; a flat stone in the church dated 1719 is to the memory of William Gyles. He and his son who succeeded him, appear by the registers to have been churchwardens. The son died without issue in 1724, leaving the estate by will to William Batchelor, who was succeeded by his son; apparently they were related to the Chownes, as a Miss Batchelor married at Alfriston signed her name as Mary Chowne Batchelor. The estate next reverted to — Diamond, who sold it to S. H. Harbin (surely it must have been a relation of his who got into trouble at Seaford for erecting a wall on "The Crouch"). Mr. Tiltson was living there in 1827, since when it has constantly changed hands, until a few years ago, when the property was sold in plots, and therefore is an estate no longer.

During excavations to widen the Seaford Road, between Deans Place and Place House,

there was found in a crouching position a skeleton of a youug man, who, tradition says, was the lost heir to Deans Place; the discovery was made in the early part of the century. To which of the many families I have named the unfortunate young gentleman belonged, I do not know. He was for many years supposed, in ghostly form, to haunt his former home, and according to Mr. Geering in "Our Parish," his appearance was looked upon as a bad omen. We have in our possession a portion of his jaw, but he has not on that account troubled us. This Deans Place house seems the most favoured spot with ghosts. I remember an old woman telling me that, as she was washing up in the back kitchen, she heard a gentle tap at the door, and on her saying "Come in," there advanced a beautiful lady in a bright blue silk dress, which rustled as she moved with stately step through the room, whence she vanished into thin air. I believe there are some who differ as to the colour of the dress, but upon that point my informant was most decided. A Mr. Woodhams and his family resided at Deans Place about fifty years ago. The young people had a firm belief in

the, or rather a, ghost, for instead of a lady it was a gentleman in a tall hat and white coat who lived in the attics. It is a curious fact that during alterations to the house, in recent years, a skeleton was found under one floor.

CHAPTER VI.

The Environments.

BLEAK, bare, and treeless are the Downs that shelter Alfriston from the east and west, but they possess many charms for those who trouble to climb them. The gorse (or as Sussex people term it, hawth) is in spring one blaze of golden bloom; the turf is carpeted with dog violets, orchids, gentians, and heather. Dear little creamy briars push their way through the gorse bushes, and the white blossom of the brambles that wander amongst them foretells the abundant supply of luscious fruit which will, in autumn, be in perfection. The air, as it comes wafted from the sea, is invigorating and life-giving. The turf is so soft and fine, and there is so much elasticity

in it, that one can walk for miles without fatigue; and when one reaches home, do full justice to a piece of real South Down mutton. What dear little sheep they are which have become so famous (isn't Sussex the only county that has its especial breed of sheep as well as cattle?), with their nice brown honest-looking faces, and what an interesting sight it is to watch a real old Sussex sheep dog collect the flock. A word from his master, and each straggler is quickly brought back. The perfect obedience to the slightest command, the patient watchfulness which he bestows on his charges, is an example we should do well to emulate. He thoroughly lives up to the creed that, "if a thing's worth doing at all, it's worth doing well."

In a pit on the Front Hill (as the range immediately above Alfriston is called) there are found, imbedded in the soil, beautiful blocks of crystallised carbonate of lime, and many flints, which everywhere lie strewn over the surface, contain fair crystals. Fossils have been picked up — a specimen of *Lophiostomus Dixoni* was discovered some years since, imbedded in chalk. It is not only on the surface

though that we may find much to interest us. These Downs were used as the burial-place of those Scandinavian and Belgic wanderers who, in the dim ages of the past, travelled to these shores. It was their custom to choose as their places of interment spots from which, owing to their elevation, the country for miles round might be visible, and in the position of these tumuli they have made no exception. Some excavations, resulting in the finding of flint and bronze instruments, pottery, and bones, took place about a hundred years since. Between the years 1859 — 69 many further discoveries of interest were made. *The first important find was of two sepulchral urns, the height of the largest being sixteen inches, and having at the top an opening of ten inches. It was found imbedded in rubble chalk, having a layer of flint over, intermixed with mould; the urn was inverted two-and-half feet from the surface, and contained a quantity of calcined human bones and the tusk of a boar. This, with a similar urn, found at the same

* The following account is written from notes taken from a paper in the Sussex Archæological Collection.

time and place, is now in the British Museum. A later investigation of this same round barrow, which is situated on Alfriston race-course, resulted in yet more treasures for the archæologist. The urns were found to the north of the barrow, and the diggers continuing the work, were rewarded with the discovery of signs of ten separate interments, which, though close together, were evidently of different dates; the primary interments were placed in a hollow, slightly scooped out of the chalk, with a layer of chalk rubble over, then carefully built flint packing, mixed with black earth, and about 15 inches of natural soil and turf, rising four feet above the level of the surrounding soil. A vein of red clay was found running through the barrow, entirely different from the red sand found in pits on some parts of the Downs. There can be no reason assigned for its appearance, nor can any idea be formed to account for this foreign element. The clay hardened at once on exposure to the air, to much the same consistence as the urns previously found. Mr. Bateman, in his "Ten Years' Digging among Saxon and Celtic Grave

Old Hilton. (*Page 66.*)

A Sussex Shepherd.

(*Page 78.*)

Hills," says that a peculiarity exists about the tumuli of the South Downs and Derbyshire Hills, inasmuch as the earth surrounding such interments presents a crystallised appearance. The most interesting remains were:—An entire skeleton of a middle-aged man, placed on the left side, doubled up, with the knees drawn up to the chin; it measured from the point of thigh bone to centre of skull one foot nine inches. The thigh bone measured one foot six-and-half inches. The skull was a most marked example of Belgic type. The next discovery was of bones of a race different from the previous find. The bones were separate, and the thigh bone broken: the extraordinary length of the skull was remarkable, "it is a true Celtic interment." Other excavations in this same barrow resulted in the discovery of more human bones and shells. North of the large barrow was another so slightly raised above the surface as to afford little hope of successful search, but on examination a hollow was discovered dug out of solid chalk, having steps going down to it; but though evidently prepared with great care, there was no sign of interment, nor did

it appear that the barrow had been previously disturbed. The former discoveries were removed from the large barrow, and placed in this hollow, with a bottle securely sealed, containing a description of the find. There have been found from time to time many curious coins, chiefly Saxon.

Some years ago men putting up posts and rails on the Front Hill to the right of Town Lane in digging struck something hard, which proved to be a skull. Further excavations were made, and six interments brought to light; the skeletons (one of which was perfect) were laid only about three feet below the surface side by side, but in separate graves, and all facing east. There was no evidence to show the date of interment.

In the summer of 1912 an Anglo-Saxon Cemetery was discovered at Winton Street, at a spot a quarter of a mile or so north of the village. A house was being built, and in trenching for the foundations of the house and the western boundary wall, the workmen came on graves, with fine bronze fibrillæ and other

articles, some gilt beads and a glass vase.

The land enclosed occupies just an acre. A careful examination of the ground showed about 120 graves. A full account of these excavations is to be found in the *Sussex Archæological Collection*, Vol. LVI., from which this extract has been taken.

Miss Gregory, the owner of the house, has had a beautiful Crucifix erected against the wall of the garden.

CHAPTER VII.

The People and Their Customs.

FOR many years before the "Odd Fellows" became as popular as at present, benefit clubs were established in most country places. The fête of the Alfriston one was held yearly on the last Thursday in May. On this occasion the Tye was used as the place of assembly. The night before, a large marquee was erected, and furnished with long tables for the annual dinner. On the fête day small stalls displayed a marvellous collection of toys, jewellery, and sweetmeats, first and foremost among the holders of these being Mrs. Haryott, and a goodly sight it was to see her cheerful face, as she dispensed to right and left her luscious gooseberry pies and golden gingerbread

nuts. Certainly no wise person would have let Club Day pass without expending a few pence on these delicious condiments.

The jewellery was of a showy description, and the low prices of diamond rings or ruby brooches debarred no one from being the proud possessor of either.

Early on the eventful day the Tye presented an animated appearance, as all the members of the Club were there in holiday attire, accompanied by their wives, children, and friends. Each member wore a rosette of royal blue and magenta satin ribbon, finished off with gay streamers of the same and a white flower in the centre. It was a favourite custom to wear this on one side of the coat or smock-frock, the other being decorated with a huge red peony.

The procession, having been formed, was headed by a dark blue banner bearing the mottoes of the society, "Unity is strength," "Boast not thyself of to-morrow"; then came the band hired for the occasion, then another banner; then, mingled as of one

common brotherhood, the farmers with their men, and the other gentlemen of the town. The quaint old houses were decorated with bunting, and it was a time of great rejoicing, and of knitting together in one bond of sympathy the interests of rich and poor.

"When each man finds his own in all men's good,
And all men work in noble brotherhood."

I remember one year my father being seriously ill, how much sympathy was shown us on a Club day, by the band ceasing to play, while passing our house, the sudden cessation of the music, and the hush that fell on all as they tramped past, denoting a more eloquent expression of good feeling than many soft, well-chosen words. (In later years the Fife and Drum Band heading a fifth of November procession showed a similar kindness of heart. I do not mean that we alone have been singled out for especial regard, but I quote these incidents from my personal experience, to show that though Sussex people may be blunt of speech, and slow of action, they are capable of exhibiting a depth of feeling for which, per-

haps. strangers would not give them credit.) The procession, after making a tour round the village, returned to the church, where a service was held, and very impressive was this service, when "Onward Christian Soldiers," was sung with the full power of healthy country lungs.

> "With vocal voices most vociferous,
> In sweet vociferation, out-vociferised
> Ev'n sound itself."

The banners during the service were carried into the church, one placed over the west door, under which every one had to stoop to get into the church; the other behind the altar, the bearers occupying chairs within the altar rails and facing the congregation. The service concluded, the ladies proceeded to the dinner booth to inspect the plentiful spread, provided on contract by Mrs. Page and her energetic daughters. The splendid joints of meat, the delicious-looking plum puddings, and above all the bright happy faces of the successful *chefs*, were well worth seeing, and the justice subsequently done to the viands testified fully to their excellence. Masters

and men dined together, the Vicar in the chair. After dinner much speechifying took place, and songs were sung. During the afternoon all disported themselves as best pleased them, dancing being the favourite amusement with the married members. "Up the middle and down again" being much in vogue, to the strains of the bands, who had a platform erected for them. Many donkeys were on hire. Roundabouts, swings, cocoa nuts, "three shies a penny, roll, bowl, or pitch," drove a roaring trade, and in this way an enjoyable meeting was brought to a close. This poor old benefit society has died a slow, lingering death, and has been replaced by the Odd Fellows' and Foresters' Clubs, who I am glad to say have revived the Church Parade; of course in these larger foundations there is more stability, but the bond of unity which the old society engendered is gone. Employer and employed are more apart than in the old days. I don't think, for instance, that it is customary now for a farmer to insist on his men going to some place of worship once on the Sunday. That a woman should come to her daughter's master and demand his interference in an undesirable

attachment seems almost incredible, but such was once the case, and the indignant old dame expressed her opinion of the obnoxious swain in this wise—"He's a blear-eyed, dra-latch, spla-footed fellow; I wouldn't let him come within a yard an me." Her daughter she described as a "slammicking toäd." The sequel shows that the young people then as now were apt to kick against parental authority, as the maiden eventually married the youth, despite the unsavoury description. The furniture of their first home, I believe, consisted of a bed, two chairs, and a table. I know she was discovered, on the arrival of the first baby, cutting out its garments with a large knife.

In the Rev. F. W. Beynon's note-book are some entries headed thus:—

"Mem. copied from an old parish book in the possession of S. Susans by E. Ellmans, 1867:—

THE CLARKS.

	s.	d.
For making a grave, single ...	1	8
For a coffin grave	2	6
For a knell	0	6
For a passing bell	0	6

"Mem.—Mrs. Russel, of Berwick, takes Sarah Luson for one year from 20th April, 1795, to 20th April, 1796.

Ye mark x of BARBARA RUSSELL.

Witness, THOMAS SUSAN."

"April 7 and 9, 1704.—Collected them to ye breef for ye Protestants of Orang ye sum of ten shillings and sevenpence.

ROBERT NORTH, VICAR."

"March 25, 1705.—Collected to the breife for the widows and orphans suffering by the — wind the sum of six shillings and one pennye.

ROBERT NORTH, VICAR.
JOHN COPPARD, } Churchwardens."
JOHN ASTON, }

"April 20th, 1688.—Then collected to the breef for the French Protestants in ye pish of Alfriston, in the county of Sussex, the sum of eleven shillings and threepence."

"January 8, 1732-3.—I, John Wade, do acknowledge to have in my hands two gold rings, ye one being ye biggest with this posie.

'My love is fixed, I will not range;
I like my choice too well to change.'

This designed for Richard Reed, now servant to me. And ye other ring designed for Elizabeth Reed, with

this posie, 'O Lord, increase love, joy, and peace,' and likewise I own to have in my hands eight shillings for ye use of ye foresaid Eliz. Witness my hand, day, and date.

Foresaid JOHN WADE.

ROBT. HAY, Witness. JOHN BEAN."

Alfriston, in common with many Sussex villages, possesses a piece of ground called "The Tye." Our "Tye" is the field at the east of which the church stands. It was the property of the Crown, being part of the Duchy of Lancaster, but through the kindly efforts of William Sanger, Esq., of the Duchy, the ground was presented to the parish for ever about 1880. On the receipt of the deed of gift, the Vicar (Rev. T. F. Hedges), in lieu of a better platform, mounted into a wheelbarrow, happening to have been left near the churchyard gate, and in the audience of three or four adult parishioners and a few children (I was among them) read the document. In the jubilee year this field was the scene of great rejoicing; amongst other amusements, the old Sussex game of stoolball was revived. The rules of the game resemble those of cricket, but the wickets

are square boards on posts. The bowler stands in the centre of the pitch; the bats used are round boards with a handle.

In the year 1882, "Jacob," a South African horned owl, was captured in Natal by Sergt.-Major Bodle, 6th Inniskilling Dragoons.* Two years later it was sent by Mr. Bodle to his mother at Alfriston, where it remained till its death in 1903.

"Furriners" (as we of Sussex term any one who belongs to another county) delight to hurl the taunt at us, that we are "silly Sussex." We need not be cast down at this implied reproach; the Sussex dialect clings so closely to its Anglo-Saxon roots that we may with justice consider that the term "silly" was not originally intended as an epithet of scorn, but rather conveys the sense of the Anglo-Saxon word sœlig (from which silly is derived), signifying happy or prosperous. The reader of these pages may judge if this small township

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* He obtained his first commission in 1893. Served in the Boer War. Promoted to General 1915, and was in command of East Coast. Died and buried at Alfriston 1924.

has been the scene of happiness or otherwise. The whole has been written from notes taken from various sources, in many cases the testimony of those whose pleasure it was to recount the tales of olden times. Thus from the dim ages of antiquity to the present generation, the history of Alfriston has been traced. "The curtains of yesterday drop down, the curtains of to-morrow roll up." We who are left must on these to-morrows

"Work, love, and wrestle on, loving God best,
Then, when our work is done, lie down and rest."

ALFRISTON.

. . THE . .

STAR INN.

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